

### **About the Blackbird Creek Reserve**

The Blackbird Creek Reserve consists of freshwater tidal and non-tidal wetlands and brackish-water marshes. Saltmarsh cordgrass (*Spartina alterniflora*) and common reed are among the most common wetland plants. The upland fringe is a mixture of shrub and tree species, including both hardwoods and softwoods.

The Blackbird Creek watershed drains a portion of southern New Castle County, Delaware. This is a predominantly rural area, consisting of wetlands, forests and agricultural lands. Blackbird Creek flows into the Delaware River just upstream from Delaware Bay.

The Blackbird Creek Reserve is 477 hectares (1180 acres) in designated size, distributed along 9.2 km (5.7 mi) of low-salinity brackish or freshwater tidal creek, starting about 9.3 km (5.8 mi) upstream from where Blackbird Creek empties into the lower Delaware River.

The Blackbird Creek Reserve contains 50 parcels of land held by private landowners, plus the DNERR and the Division of Fish and Wildlife. Within the Blackbird Reserve's designated boundaries about 85.8 ha (212 ac) of tidal marshes, upland fields, woodlots, and croplands were purchased by the DNERR in 1990, and four additional properties were purchased over the next 15 years including 3.4 ha (8.4 ac) in 2003, 20.2 ha (50 ac) in 2004, and 59.3 ha (146.6 ac) in 2005. The remaining majority of the Reserve is still in private ownership and access is only through landowner permission.

An additional 74.1 ha (183 ac) of tidal marsh, woodlands, and croplands, across Blackbird Creek from the DNERR property and within the Reserve's designated boundaries, was purchased in 1996 by DNREC's Division of Fish and Wildlife (as part of the Division's Cedar Swamp Wildlife Area), and is available for use in DNERR activities.

Much of the expansive tidal marshes and upland borders along Lower Blackbird Creek, downstream of the Blackbird Creek Reserve's designated boundaries, are owned and managed by the Division of Fish and Wildlife. This area primarily consists of a large parcel known as The Rocks (which is also part of the Cedar Swamp State Wildlife Area). Upstream of the Reserve, in non-tidal areas west of Rt. 13, are extensive areas of forested wetlands containing unique coastal plain ponds, much of it within [Blackbird State Forest](#) and Blackbird Reserve Wildlife Area, which is owned and managed by the Delaware Department of Agriculture's Forestry Section and the [Division of Fish and Wildlife](#) respectively.